

Volunteers in Dentistry Program

A Manual for Nebraska Regional Public Health Departments

**Nebraska Health and Human Services System
Office of Oral Health and Dentistry**

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Congratulations! You have decided to develop a volunteer dental program for your community. A volunteer dental program is one whereby dentists volunteer their time to provide free/minimal cost dental care to those in need, especially children who lack access to needed dental care.

The **Volunteers in Dentistry Program - A Manual for Nebraska Regional Public Health Departments** is an outline agencies can utilize to start their journey on establishing a volunteer dental clinic. The **West Central Dental Clinic Handbook - Tips for Starting a Volunteers in Dentistry Program** provides more in-depth description of how to start and operate a volunteer dental clinic. If you are interested in attaining the West Central Dental Clinic Handbook, contact Shirleen Smith at West Central District Health Department at (308)696-1201 or shirleensmith@wcdhd.org.

The two manuals would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of individuals who were instrumental in starting the West Central Dental Clinic in North Platte, Nebraska, in particular, the local dentists and Mid-Plains Community College. This manual is dedicated to your efforts. We also extend a special thank you to Dr. Mark Nehring, Maternal & Child Health Bureau, who facilitated the HRSA State Oral Health Collaboration Systems grant that funded the manual development and the West Central Dental Clinic start-up.

It is our hope that the path of your journey is clearer due to our learnings. Best wishes!

Table of Contents

PLANNING	4
Volunteer in Dentistry (V.I.D.) Committee	4
Needs Assessment.....	4
Target Audience.....	5
PARTNERSHIPS	5
Lead Agency	5
Dental Location Site	6
Dental Community.....	6
Referral Sources.....	6
Financial Resources	6
Volunteers	7
OPERATIONS.....	7
Flow Charts.....	7
Scope of Services.....	8
Education	8
Scheduling.....	8
Follow-up Care and Recall	9
Patient Forms	9
POLICIES	9
Policy on Licensure and Insurance	9
Rate Setting and Insurance Reimbursements.....	9
No Show Policy	10
Confidentiality	10
ASSESSMENT	10
Evaluation Measures.....	10
Strategic and Business Plan	10
Sample Budget.....	11
Implementation Hints.....	11
Sustainability Factors.....	11
Attachment 1: Flow chart – Referrals, Appointment, and Initial Screening	13
Attachment 2: Follow-up	14
Attachment 3: Sample Budget	15

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PLANNING

Volunteer in Dentistry (V.I.D.) Committee

Recruit a V.I.D. Committee to assess need, design the program, and recruit volunteers and staff. The V.I.D. Committee should include at least the following:

<u>Committee Member</u>	<u>Role</u>
Local dentist	Champion the cause.
Dental Hygienist	Promote education and prevention.
Local health department leader	Assist in coordinating the program within the community.
School and/or public health nurse	Assist in identifying children and adults in need.
Staff and/or administrative assistant	Assist in developing needed forms, manuals.
Facilitator or communication expert	Develop a clear message for both the dental community and the public.
Grant writer	Establish evaluation measures and secure future funding.

Needs Assessment

A needs assessment describes dental health care needs and access to dental care in your community. The following are examples of questions to ask:

- How many dentists are located in the community?
- How many are over 60 years old?
- How many dental hygienists?
- How many dental offices?
- How many dental chairs does the community have?
- How many kids in the area?
- How many senior citizens in the area?
- Are hospital dental services available in the community?
- How many visits to the hospital emergency room are dental related?
- How many or % of school children have untreated cavities?
- How many people are covered by dental insurance?

- How many people are covered by state medical insurance (e.g., Medicaid, State Children's Health Insurance Program)?
- How many Head Start children have untreated cavities? What number or percent of the population is eligible for Medicaid Service?
- What percentage of the Medicaid population receives any dental service in a given year?
- Is the local water system optimally fluoridated?
- What percent of the populations served by optimally fluoridated water?

Nebraska Health and Human Services has two websites that can assist you in collecting the above data:

1. Office of Oral Health and Dentistry
<http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/dental/resources/listofdentalhealthsites.htm>
2. Nebraska County Profiles
<http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/profile1102/profindex.htm>

Target Audience

After you conduct your needs analysis, a particular population may rise to the top of the list as having significant need issues. Examples include children under 18, adults over 65, ethnic groups, special populations such as disabled individuals and the homeless or low-income individuals of all ages.

Once a target population has been identified, the V.I.D. Committee can design a Volunteers in Dentistry program which best meets the needs of both the patients and the service providers. For a Head Start population, it may be best to have a dentist or dental hygienist screen the children and prioritize their oral health needs. Those in need of emergency dental care would be seen first and those with minimal or no dental need may simply receive dental education/prevention services. For some children perhaps a portable dental unit and chair could be brought to the Head Start School and a dental hygienist could provide a dental cleaning or sealants on site. The other children needing more complex dental care could be transported to the local dental offices where perhaps each dentist has agreed to see three children for free or minimal cost per month. Those children needing hospital dentistry and specialty care could work with a dental coordinator to arrange for such care. A Volunteers in Dentistry program may take any form needed once a target audience has been established. Developing a strategic and business plan is important to keep the program on track. Refer to the Strategic and Business Plan section below.

PARTNERSHIPS

Lead Agency

Take a step back and critically assess your organization prior to going forward. Is the Board of Directors on board with this project? Is the dental community receptive to the idea? Do you have resources to get the clinic organized while funds are being raised?

Do you have staff within your organization with the capacity to organize the project? Capacity, in this case, is defined as someone who is familiar with dental terminology and processes (perhaps a former dental assistant or dental hygienist) necessary to design a program. They must have attention to detail, work well with partners, and be able to set up processes.

Dental Location Site

- Is there is a local dental school, dental hygienist, or dental assistant program in your area? Ask if clinic space can be utilized after-hours. Would staff and students be willing to assist as volunteers?
- Is there a dentist whose office is closed one day, morning, or afternoon a week? Would they be willing to host the clinic at their office with a set of established ground rules? For example, they may provide the fixed equipment. However, supplies would be purchased by the program. Other dentists, hygienists, and assistants would staff the clinic.
- Is there a neutral location where a dental clinic could be developed from scratch? For example, some communities use church basements, service organizations (e.g., Lions, Eagles, Elk) facilities that have some extra room or spaces that can be rented at a reduced rate. Grant funding and donations can be used to purchase equipment (dental and office) as well as supplies. Make sure this is a long-term commitment.

Dental Community

- Aim to have at least 50% of the dentists in your location volunteer. The dentists will only have to volunteer a few times a year. There will be camaraderie among the volunteers.
- Recruit two or three dental hygienists to assist in recruiting other hygienists. Ideally, the hygienists will volunteer their services. Some dental programs pay the hygienists or the dentist may donate their dental hygienist's time for the program.
- You may want to consider hiring one or two dental assistants that consistently work each clinic. The dental assistants will be instrumental in charting and record keeping. Consistent charting is very important to those who will read the charts later.

Referral Sources

Contact social service providers in your community who work with the population you would like to serve. Is oral health an issue for their clients? How can your organizations benefit from one another? If children are your target population, consider engaging the school nurses and appropriate administration in the referral process.

Financial Resources

Contact local professional and service organizations that may be willing to fund you not only initially but sustain an annual contribution. Armed with the needs-based data you collected, you can educate local funders to become interested in your project.

The following are some tips on where to find supplemental funding for your volunteer dental program:

- Local service and professional organizations.
- Private individuals who are passionate about oral health.
- Annual fundraising campaign.
- Grants

Thank you! Always write a thank you note to the organizations or individuals that you have approached even if they do not give you a donation at this time. If you leave a good impression with them, they may remember you during their next giving cycle.

Volunteers

- Program champions. Every successful program has two key people pushing it forward – a visionary and someone with an eye for detail. The detail person may be the dental coordinator. The visionary can be someone within the community who is passionate specifically about oral health or generally concerned about the well being of your target audience. This person can be a dentist or someone in the community that has creditability with the dental community and your staff. They may be instrumental in fundraising and/or generating excitement among the dental volunteer community.
- Patient Resources. You may have determined that your target population needs better oral health care. However if you or your organization has not worked with this population segment, you may initially have problems convincing them that they need better oral health care. Look around your area. Are there religious or community groups that already outreach to your target audience? Would they be willing to partner with you? For example, you may need volunteer transportation services for the elderly or low income who do not own cars. You may need translation services
- Dental Clinic Volunteers. Identify positions that can be filled by volunteers. Examples include a receptionist, education specialist, and scheduling specialist. Write job descriptions and rotate responsibilities to prevent confusion and burn-out.

OPERATIONS

Flow Charts

The following attachments outline sample flow charts for key processes:

- Attachment 1: Referrals, Appointment, Initial Screening
- Attachment 2: Follow-up

Scope of Services

One of the first important decisions of the staff, volunteers, and V.I.D. committee is to determine what services will be delivered at the program clinic and what follow-up services will be offered at the private dental offices or program clinic. Many volunteer dental clinics provide primary services at the program clinic and provide secondary services in a follow-up setting. The following list is provided to begin discussions with your dental program team:

- Primary Services - Dental Program Clinic
 - Education
 - X-rays
 - Exam/screen
 - Preventative Services
 - Cleaning
 - Fluoridation
 - Prescriptions
- Secondary Services – Private Dental Offices or Dental Program Clinic
 - Sealants
 - Fillings
 - Extractions
 - Restorations
- Tertiary Services – Private Dental Offices or Dental Program Clinic
 - Restorations of missing teeth through bridges and dentures
 - Crowns
 - Root Canals

Education

Dental health education is an important component to a volunteer dental program. The following are some general ideas you may want to implement in your program:

- One-on-one or small group talk with key education messages;
- Education videos and DVDs;
- Easy-to-read educational brochures;
- Small bag with toothbrush, toothpaste, floss; and
- Demonstration of brushing and flossing by hygienist.

Scheduling

Based on dental volunteers and utilization of the clinic setting, set the dates and times the clinic will be open. Appointments can be made through the dental coordinator who can explain the administration fee and no show policies. Remember to allow more time in the schedule for older children and adults than for small children.

Choose consistent days and times and schedule several months in advance. Both the volunteers and the facility can then plan around your schedule and you around their schedules.

Follow-up Care and Recall

Inevitably, patients will have problems identified during the screening which will need to be addressed at a later date. The V.I.D. committee and volunteer dentists should determine where follow-up treatment should be administered. After screening, the lead agency and the dentists should assign the patients to specific dentists for the remainder of the patient's needed care. Appointments may be made through the lead agency or private offices if applicable.

Consider developing a recall system where the lead agency sends reminder postcards to patients six to twelve months for follow-up care.

Patient Forms

Develop patient forms prior to starting your clinic. Your dental steering committee and local dental offices should be able to help you. Have actual patients fill out the forms initially to see if it makes sense to them and evaluate if they are providing you with the information you need. Dental schools are a good source for sample patient forms. You may modify the forms to meet your specific program needs. The following forms are suggested forms for your dental program:

- Dental Chart
- Application Form for Dental Care
- Application for Child's Dental Care Authorization and Release and Informed Consent
- Release and Consent for Photographs and Information
- Notice of Privacy Practices & Acknowledgment of Receipt
- Dental Education Check List
- School Dental Appointment Excuse Slip

POLICIES

Policy on Licensure and Insurance

Each volunteer dentist must provide proof of their license to practice dentistry in the state where the clinic resides. They must also be covered by malpractice insurance. Keep a copy of these documents on file.

Rate Setting and Insurance Reimbursements

Initially, you will need to determine if you will charge an administration fee and/or have a sliding scale rate for the dental program clinic and follow-up procedures. An administration fee of \$10 - \$25 is suggested. Medicaid may be the primary source of income. If so, ensure the person billing for the V.I.D. program understands your state's dental insurance program.

No Show Policy

Inevitably a patient will not show for his or her appointment. Develop a no-show policy.

Confidentiality

Have each patient or guardian sign a HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability) form to ensure confidentiality.

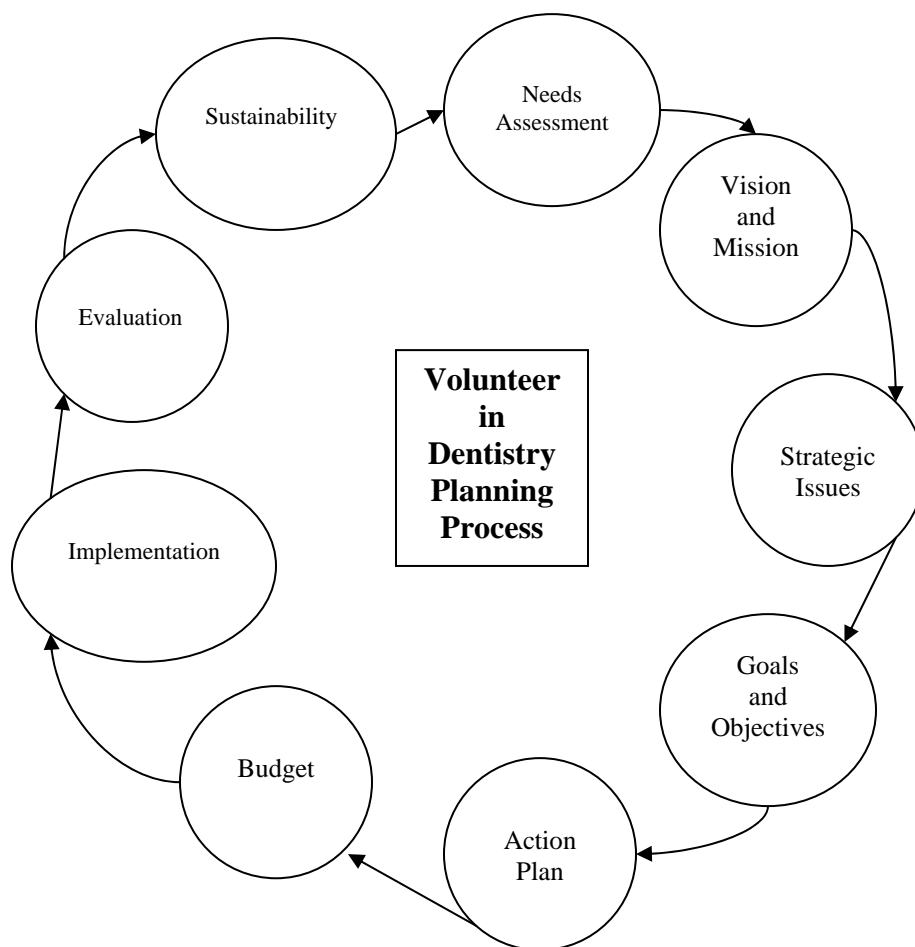
ASSESSMENT**Evaluation Measures**

Establish a set of baseline measures. The following are some examples:

- Needs analysis – continued from baseline surveys described in “Needs Assessment”
- Number of patients seen
- Patient demographics (age, gender, ethnic background)
- Human resources (hours, \$ paid, volunteer hours)
- % of volunteer dentists
- Services provided
- Relative value of services
- Referral sources
- Evaluation program measures such as sealant effectiveness
- Financial (expenses, income, profit & loss)
- Actual \$ spent/patients seen
- Patient payment (Medicaid, self-pay, none)

Strategic and Business Plan

Planning is key to keeping a community team working in the same direction. Effective planning encourages everyone at the table to express their views prior to putting operations in place. Once the clinic is operational, planning updates increases communication and minimizes misunderstandings. The following are suggested steps in your planning process:



Sample Budget

Attachment 3 provides a sample budget for the first year of operations for a clinic that operated twelve half days in one year and saw approximately 200 children.

Implementation Hints

Organizing a Volunteers in Dentistry program is similar to conducting an orchestra who only occasionally performs together. Patience, listening skills, and engaging players are critical for the program champion as well as the dental coordinator. The dentists, in particular, need to be assured that the program is not a threat to their practice nor will the program take advantage of their time. It is encouraged to have periodic meetings to discuss process improvement recommendations, measures, and scheduling. Frequent recognition of all volunteers and staff will sustain their energy.

Sustainability Factors

The two most significant sustainability factors are (1) funding; and (2) volunteer resources. Track your budget and make appropriate interventions. Ask the V.I.D. committee and volunteer dentists for advice. If insurance and administrative fee revenue are not sufficient, consider implementing a sliding scale fee policy or implement a

periodic fundraiser. Regarding volunteers, respect and recognition are key factors in retention. Check in with your volunteers periodically to ensure they are engaged in the process and to attain their feedback.

Attachment 1: Flow chart – Referrals, Appointment, and Initial Screening

Attachment 2: Follow-up

Attachment 3: Sample Budget

The following table outlines the West Central Dental Clinic profit and loss statement for the first two years of operation. If you have any questions regarding this table, please contact Joanna Alexander at 308-696-1201.

	Year 1 July 2004 – June 2005	Year 2 July 2005 – June 2006
Income		
Clinic receipts	\$6,240.48	\$16,405.50
Grants	6,250.00	12,500.00
Total Income	\$12,490.48	\$28,905.50
Expense		
Advertising	\$(100.00)	\$(1,254.10)
Clinic Supplies	(12.00)	(1,006.13)
Dental Supplies	(764.16)	0
Education Materials	(11.77)	(25.00)
Office Related Supplies	(883.34)	(816.29)
Equipment	(205.53)	(433.89)
Postage and Delivery	(37.00)	(108.10)
Storage	(570.50)	(869.00)
Insurance	0	(223.77)
Meetings	(936.95)	(1,572.94)
Mileage	(144.63)	(102.57)
Fuel	(71.09)	0
Rental Vehicle	(521.58)	0
Rent		(775.00)
Public Relations	(1,044.34)	(767.70)
Contract Labor	(410.81)	0
Professional Services (1)	(1,810.56)	(5,271.04)
Salary and Wages (2)	(10,026.22)	(9,168.95)
Payroll Tax	(634.99)	(700.25)
Total Expenses	(18,185.47)	(20,094.73)
Net Income	\$ (5,694.99)	5,810.77

Note:

1. Professional fees covered hygienists and dental assistance fees as well as facilitation and writing consultation services.
2. Salaries and wages and payroll tax covered West Central District Health Department staff coordinating and manning the West Central Dental Clinic.